

CITY OF NEWARK, NJ'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Wynona Lipman -- April 5, 1997

Q: Good afternoon. This is Glen Marie Brickus here at my residence with Senator Wynona Lipman. Today is April 5, 1997. Senator Lipman, thank you so much for coming and being willing to become a part of the Scott-Krueger Mansion African-American Cultural Center.

Lipman: Well, I'm delighted to be asked to become a part of the Krueger Mansion Cultural Center.

Q: Now, if you will, will you give me your full name, your date of birth and your place of birth.

Lipman: My full name is Evelyn Wynona Moore Lipman. My place of birth is McClains, Georgia.

Q: And what is your occupation?

Lipman: My occupation is an associate professor and a legislator.

Q: Did you have a primary occupation? In other words, what kind of work did you do before you became a professor and a state legislator?

Lipman: I was a school teacher by trade. I taught at Morehouse College. I taught French. One of the more important points of my life was I tutored Martin Luther King when he came down from Boston to refresh his French before taking his final. I went to New York, first I went to Europe to study at the Sorbonne, then I went to New York, and I taught at the high school part of the Little Red Schoolhouse. Then my husband and I moved to New Jersey, to Montclair, and I came to Newark after that when my district was changed. I became a politician, a legislator, in Montclair. I was a freeholder. And when I became a senator, they moved my district to Newark.

Which I'm glad they did because I like Newark.

Q: Senator, what was the extent of your education? How far did you go in school?

Lipman: A doctorate of philosophy in French and social sciences.

Q: Whom did you marry?

Lipman: I married Matthew Lipman of Vineland, New Jersey. We made a home and had two children in Montclair, New Jersey. And later we were divorced after we moved to Newark, and he is a professor at Montclair State.

Q: When did you marry Mr. Lipman and where did you marry him?

Lipman: I forget when. But I married him many years ago in France, in Paris, France, where we both students at the Sorbonne University. And we got married.

Q: How did you meet your husband and how long did you know him before you were married?

Lipman: I got a scholarship, a Fulbright Scholarship, to go and study in Paris. I met my husband on the boat going over, and after we had been in France about a year, we got married.

Q: What kind of work did, was it Mr. Lipman or Dr. Lipman?

Lipman: Dr. Lipman.

Q: What kind of work did he do?

Lipman: He was studying for a degree in philosophy. He had a Fulbright Scholarship too. And

he got his Ph.D. shortly before I did. We both come out of Columbia University, New York.

Q: And I believe you said you had two children.

Lipman: Yes.

Q: What were their names?

Lipman: Their names were William John Lipman and Karen Ann Lipman.

Q: And where are they now?

Lipman: Will died of a lymphoma cancer about ten years ago. He had already been married for about two or three years. And, but he could not be operated for lymphoma and so he died. Karen has moved to Atlanta, Georgia. She has opened a shop. Karen is a master's in business. And she did a stint at New Jersey Transit, and she went to Atlanta and worked for the Metropolitan Rapid Transit System in Atlanta. And then she opened her own shop.

Q: What was your father's name and where was he born?

Lipman: My father's name was John Wesley Moore. He was born in Georgia, LaGrange, Georgia to be exact. And he died there.

Q: Your mother's maiden name and her place of birth.

Lipman: My mother's maiden name was Annabelle Torrian. She was from Indianapolis, Indiana by way of Kentucky. She went to school, to college, in Georgia, Augusta, Georgia. Hanes Institute. And she met my father and they got married.

Q: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Lipman: I had two brothers and one sister.

Q: Are they still living?

Lipman: My brothers are both dead. They died the same year about three or four years ago they died. Of different illnesses. The younger brother had cancer. The older brother, he was seventy-five then, died of a stroke. My sister is still alive. She lives in Washington, D.C. with her two daughters. One just got a doctorate and the other one has a doctorate and a juris doctor. She's a lawyer too.

Q: That's beautiful. What was your father's occupation?

Lipman: My father was a contractor. That's where one of my jobs at Essex County College is to have a small business seminar once a month in which I get the best speakers I can find to talk to my contractor friends. And that's where I learned contracting when I was coming up working for my father.

Q: What was your mother's occupation?

Lipman: She was a teacher. When my father let her teach. He stopped her from teaching very early. She was a very delightful person. I really enjoyed knowing my mother and my father. I loved him too. But my mother was such a joy.

Q: I guess that's where you get that sunny personality of yours. Have you Senator ever changed your name because of any kind of organizational or group affiliations or memberships, such as many people take on Muslim names or African names, etc.?

Lipman: No. I never changed my name. Except to get married.

Q: When did you first come to Newark to live?

Lipman: I came to Newark, let's see, I think it was 72. And we moved to the Wickwake area in Newark. My whole family moved at that time. And although my husband later stayed in Montclair. He's a professor at Montclair State College, Montclair State University, excuse me. My children remained with me and finished school.

Q: And specifically why did you move to Newark?

Lipman: Because my district changed. At first I was a freeholder from Essex County and that took in the whole county. But when I became a Senator, I was redistricted for one man, one vote into Newark.

Q: Did you know anybody in Newark before you moved here?

Lipman: Oh I knew a lot of people in Newark because I had been a freeholder at the courthouse in Newark, and so I knew many of the people here when I moved.

Q: So no one really had to sell you on the idea of moving to Newark or tell you an awful lot about Newark before you moved here.

Lipman: No. They didn't have to sell me on the idea. I thought this was where I belonged and I came to stay.

Q: And you, where did you come from when you went to Montclair to live?

Lipman: I came from New York City. I was teaching at the Little Red, the high school part of the

Little Red Schoolhouse, and so my registration said Wynona Lipman of New York City. But really I'm from LaGrange, Georgia.

Q: I was going to ask. Did you ever live in the south?

Lipman: Yes. I didn't leave home in Georgia, in LaGrange, until I was fourteen. Then I went to college when I was fourteen years old.

Q: Really?

Lipman: Yes. We didn't have such good schools in LaGrange, and I went through it very fast because my mother was a teacher and she taught us at home and we skipped some grades and we went to college early. So I went to Taladega College in Alabama first. That's where I got a BA in French and social science.

Q: So what I'm trying to understand, when you left LaGrange, Georgia, it was with your parents, your mother and your father?

Lipman: No. They didn't leave LaGrange, Georgia. They stayed. I just went away to college. And I came back. And I went to Atlanta, to Atlanta University for a master's degree. I still came back to LaGrange. And when I went to France, I went from LaGrange. My mother had died but my father was still there.

Q: Okay. I'm trying to get you from LaGrange, Georgia into New Jersey.

Lipman: Into Newark. Well, I moved to Newark after my ex-husband was then teaching in New York City. So we moved to New York, and I got a teaching job at the Little Red Schoolhouse, the high school part of the Little Red Schoolhouse. And after two years, we decided to try to have children and a home and like, and so we moved to New Jersey. That's how I got to New Jersey.

Q: What happened when you arrived in Newark?

Lipman: Well, there wasn't a brass band if that's what you're asking me. No. I made a very inauspicious move. We moved to the Wickwake section as I said. And I took up my role as being Senator of Newark. And lately my district has been changed to Newark, most of it, and Hillside.

Q: So you had to establish a household once you got to.

Lipman: I had to establish a home. Yes.

Q: And that was in the Wickwake section, you say, in Newark when you first came here.

Lipman: Yes. How long have I been in Newark?

Q: Yes.

Lipman: Since 72. I think I said that before.

Q: Since 1972. Now I'm looking. And you first, when you first got to Newark, you lived on Elizabeth Avenue.

Lipman: And I still live on Elizabeth Avenue.

Q: Yeah. But you've been some other places since then.

Lipman: No. I haven't moved anywhere but Elizabeth Avenue in Newark.

Q: Ever since you've lived in Newark, you've lived on Elizabeth Avenue.

Lipman: Yes mam.

Q: Did you buy a house there?

Lipman: No. We tried to buy a house, but then it, the title was not clear on the house. And by that time, my husband was thinking that he had to stay in Montclair, and so we were slowly divorced. And my children and I stayed in the apartment.

Q: How long did you live there?

Lipman: I still live there.

Q: In that same apartment.

Lipman: No. I moved to a very large apartment.

Q: Now this is what I say. How long did you stay in the first apartment that you moved into?

Lipman: I don't know really. I guess it was, let's see. My children grew up and they needed larger space. My son got married and so we moved to the nineteenth floor, with a very large apartment, which I still have.

Q: What was your first impression of Newark when you first came here?

Lipman: Well, I hadn't seen too much of, I hadn't been in the residential sections much. Because when I came to Newark first, I came from Montclair. I lived in Montclair across from the high school there. And I went to the courthouse to meetings and so forth. And then sometimes we went to churches and gatherings in the community in Newark, and I had met a lot of people. But I soon got interested in trying to see all of the wards in Newark and so forth. And I found out that



each ward in Newark has a different personality. They're all in my twenty-ninth legislative district, but they all have a different personality. The Central Ward is a lot quicker and smarter, and I don't know whether smarter or not.

Q: Sure we are.

Lipman: It moves quicker and the churches move quicker. And then the South Ward is slower, but there are a great many residential homes there and so forth. And the mayor lives there and a lot of councilmen and freeholders and so forth. That's where I live. Then there's the East Ward that Portuguese. It's entirely different. It's like being in a foreign country to go to the East Ward. I just love to walk up and down the streets there cause I felt like I was back in France. And then there's the North Ward, which I don't know that well yet. But in temperament and in language even, that's different from the rest of my wards.

Q: According to your own observation, what was physical Newark like when you first came here?

Lipman: It was after the riot, of course. And there was still a lot of desolation. Abandoned homes, houses, buildings that needed repair and all that. But since I have been here, I have watched Newark blossom with the buildings going up downtown, and now the buildings and new homes spreading through the neighborhoods, and the projects being knocked down, and so forth. And the garden apartments being established. I enjoy living in this city. There is crime I know, but the police taught me how to, you know, operate. And so I'm very thankful about it. But I love the way that Newark is responding in the years that I have been here. And it has become a buzzing metropolis. I'm making up words here. [Laughter] But I'm thinking of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. Your cultural center that's going to be, and all of that.

Q: Getting back to, what was the condition of the housing that you first moved into when you came to Newark? Was it a substantial apartment building or?

Lipman: It was a fine apartment building. It was wonderful. They called it a luxury apartment. We had a swimming pool, we had sauna and all that on Elizabeth Avenue. And some very nice people lived there. But slowly, you know, it deteriorated. And now I'm happy to say that under new owners it is springing to life again.

Q: What was the ethnicity of the persons who lived in that apartment house?

Lipman: When I went there, there were white people. Not so many latinos. There were elderly people there. There are no elderly people, well, except me. I'm old. But there now. Because when the house started to deteriorate, of course, the elevators would break down. If you have some years on you, you hate to be inconvenienced like that. And so for a while there was only young people and middle aged people that lived there. But now some elderly people are back. The culture there now is African-American, latino. We have white people there, but I think they are part of the construction that's going on in the building. It's undergoing now a complete renovation.

Q: What was the, say the economic status, the intellectual or educational background of persons who lived in that first apartment building?

Lipman: They're differing. The education was, I think, good. Gus Henningberg lived there. He was my neighbor. And you know he was on a show in New York and so forth. Teachers, police officers, lawyers and so forth lived there. It was a great, you know, sort of camaraderie there. But then when the building started to go down, of course, other people, rougher people moved in. But they were always good to me. That's a shame to say that.

Q: So those persons who lived there at the time when you first moved over there, they were relatively high income folk?

Lipman: Yes. High income, very good education. There are people there now who have very

good education too. Who just moved in.

Q: What do you think accounted for those persons who were more highly educated and who had higher incomes, what do you think accounted for them moving out, and the lower echelon, if you will, --

Lipman: Moving in.

Q: -- moving in?

Lipman: Well, you know, when you, I can't tell you. I used to say, I used to want to go out a lot when I was younger. And I said, gee all those men my age have moved to the suburbs. What am I going to do? [Laughter] What made them move? Well, I guess they were thinking of their children's education, for one thing. That makes some judges and so forth move. People who come into the city and work every day, but go home to the suburbs. It is not an unusual story. There was the white flight and then there was the black flight. So the lower class people have to move in to take the space. But I think things are changing now.

Q: Was there a particular reason why you and your husband moved into that community in the first place?

Lipman: Yeah. It was a swank community at the time that we moved in. It was very nice surroundings. We were pleased about our children. And you see, I did not worry about my children in the Newark school system because, although they went to the school with the name of Newark on the building, they went to the Newark Academy, which was in Livingston. Because they had scholarships to go there. My son went to Seton Hall Prep. He had a scholarship to go there. So, the education of my own children would not bother me so bad.

Q: And you still live in that same neighborhood?

Lipman: Yes mam.

Q: What was the number of the apartment building that you lived in when you first moved over there?

Lipman: 555 Elizabeth Avenue.

Q: And you still live at 555 Elizabeth. Now I understand why you won't move from over there.

Lipman: Yes. I like the neighborhood.

Q: Where did you do your shopping in Newark at that time?

Lipman: Where did I do my shopping? At the corner store. You know, when I went for groceries, I would go further out. Right around the corner is Hillside, you know. And there was a Pathmark in Hillside about three blocks from where I lived. And so. I live near the edge of Newark I guess. I'm very near the airport. My son used to work there. And so I didn't find it hard to do shopping. And then you have a car, and you go where you need to go.

Q: What was the race of the persons who owned the businesses in the community or near the community where you lived?

Lipman: Well, when we first went there, they were white. Later on, they changed to Korean and later on they changed to Muslim. Now they're back. Because some nationality, I'm not sure what it is, but it's oriental is in the store.

Q: How were you and other ethnics treated by the white owners of businesses in the community?

Lipman: I really can't tell you because they always treated me very nicely. I didn't have any

mishaps or anything. So I can't. I'm not a good one to ask that question.

Q: But I would have to ask why do you think that they were particularly nice to you?

Lipman: Because I had a title. Because I was in politics. And I'm supposed to be able to get things for people and do things for people. And also supposed to be rich, which I'm not. But that's why I think.

Q: Well, do you think, did you notice or did you know of any incidents or any of the merchants being less than nice to any of the other persons?

Lipman: Yes. Yes. I do. They didn't want small black children in their shop because they said they steal. And they would call the cops or they would put them out forcibly. Then we'd have to go speak to them. Half the time they didn't speak English well. And right down the street there's a place run by Indians from India, the milk shop, the 7-11 Shop.

Q: Were there any black owners of businesses in the neighborhood at that time?

Lipman: I think the corner store changed to black at one time, but then it was quickly turned over. There are businesses below me there on Elizabeth Avenue where the owners were some of the local politicians. The barber shop, you know, and Chinese food shop, and a corner store at both ends of the block. Those are run by black people. The barber shop especially is black. And, you know, I'm just about a block, two blocks, from Bergen Street, and that's where the center of life in South Ward is.

Q: Did you ever notice any resentment on the part of African-Americans toward the white owners or non-black business owners in the community?

Lipman: The Korean owners, they were not white; they were foreign. Of course I did. Difficult

to get along with. But, you know, though the country that they come from and if they didn't speak English well, on Bergen Street they sort of learned to get along with blacks. They did. They do. And there are many shops in Bergen Street.

Q: Did local stores offer credit to the residents in the neighborhood.

Lipman: Now, that's one thing I found out about Newark. You got to have the money to pay. They don't like to take checks. They don't like, you know, to deal with credit cards. You need to have the money.

Q: Why do you think that is?

Lipman: Because there's so much, you know, graft and people write a check and they don't have the backing. The owner refuses to take a check. Can't blame him much. Has a big sign, no checks.

Q: How, you left the south when you were relatively young. I believe you said fourteen years old.

Lipman: I went to college.

Q: How much do you remember about lifestyles in the south before you left there?

Lipman: Oh, I remember quite a bit.

Q: What was your life like in the south?

Lipman: Well, we lived in a big house which is not there anymore in LaGrange which my father built. He was a contractor. We had, my life was pretty nice. I guess no care. I went to the local

public school. My mother taught me a whole lot faster at home. Went to the local high school. There wasn't any trouble. I worked in my father's drug store, and I was the soda jerk. It was very hard work on weekends. That's the thing I had, I loved my brothers and sisters. I had a good time with them. We had friends who'd come over, stay the night, and so forth. But it was a segregated south, you know.

Q: What kind of foods do you remember having been more or less staples in your family? You know, like most of us who come from the south, in case I never told you, you didn't know, I grew up in the state of Louisiana.

Lipman: Oh, I didn't know. I'm glad you told me. Does that account for the friendship?

Q: It's possible. That's possible. There were certain foods that we ate. You know, and I can remember very well and I still cook those kinds of foods.

Lipman: Yeah. Pork chops.

Q: Pork chops. And don't let me talk about those other parts of the pig.

Lipman: Ham.

Q: Right.

Lipman: Pigs feet. My brother was very fond of pickled pigs feet. I can remember that.

Q: Did you continue to eat any of those kinds of foods after you left the south?

Lipman: Oh yes. Absolutely. You never get over that. You always want that.

Q: What about, did. Now.

Lipman: Soul food.

Q: Soul food. That's right. You have a kind of different background to most of us who grew up in the south and came here to live. Many of our lifestyles, our habits, the things that we did there we still do when we came here. But we didn't go to France to school.

Lipman: Yes. I went to cooking school too. I went to the Cordon Bleu.

Q: Oh really.

Lipman: I should be a gourmet cook.

Q: So, but you still find that you enjoy those kinds of foods even now.

Lipman: Oh yes I do. I do.

Q: I certainly do. What about dress styles in the south? Now, I'm talking about comparisons between the south, not all of those other exotic places that you went and that you lived. In terms of dress styles, was there differences the way your remember people dressing in the south and the way people dressed when you came here?

Lipman: I hardly remember people wearing coats. It wasn't so cold. It was a strange winter if it was cold and we saw ice.

Q: Right. Right. That's the way it was in Louisiana where I grew up. I think I saw snow once.

Lipman: Yeah. I don't remember seeing snow in the south. Of course, my daughter tells me they



have it now in Atlanta.

Q: The weather patterns have changed drastically. We can sit here and watch it on C Span and on the Weather Channel. You see what's happening everywhere.

Lipman: The floods, that's right.

Q: But it certainly has changed from the time when I grew up in the south. You know, when I left the south, I went to Westchester County, New York to live. And if the --

Lipman: With the cold weather.

Q: -- temperature got in the forty, I wouldn't go outside.

Lipman: I bet. And then you go.

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Lipman: I like to remember what I did, what I was.

Q: Well, Senator, we were talking about, we were comparing lifestyles between the south, as you remembered it, and what the lifestyles were when you first came to Newark. And I think we were talking about the changes in weather patterns, etc. When you came to Newark, were you ever, did you ever consider people who were not a part of your birth family as extended family members.

Lipman: Yes.

Q: Either in the south or here. Like people who were older, we referred to as Aunt Mary or Aunt whomever, and uncle. And they would chastise us or discipline us as quickly as our parents

would.

Lipman: That's quite true. That happened in Georgia and it happened in Newark too. I had to have help taking care of my kids when I wasn't there. And we had some very faithful friends who helped me raise the children. Of which I'm grateful right now. The aides I took with me to Trenton helped me take care of my kids.

Q: What were some of the special events that you remember that African-American people celebrated in the south?

Lipman: In the south. Christmas. We didn't, when I was young, there was no Christmas Attics parade in Georgia. There was no African heritage parade in Georgia. There was a Fourth of July parade, but that was all. We were not a large, I guess, we weren't even half of the town population. But we celebrated, you know, on our own in our own neighborhoods.

Q: I was going to ask did blacks and whites celebrate together the Fourth of July.

Lipman: No. They did not. They did not. You could go and watch the parade, you know, from afar. My father had a drug store downtown on a side street, and he had, there were black businesses across the street. There was a restaurant, there was a pool room, there was a barbershop. And on the other side there was a drug store and so forth. Most of that was black owned and black run. I don't exactly know if they all were black owned, but they were black run at the time. My father owned his place.

Q: Was there to your knowledge or do you remember whether there were differences in the way African-Americans celebrated births and deaths or marriages, that kind of thing in the south.

Lipman: Absolutely. Like a long church ceremony that white people would never think of having I don't think. But let me tell you something strange. Until I was about six or seven years old, I

played with white children in the backyard. My father's store was on a side street, and then there was the main street, with the main stores. And I'd come out of the back door, and the white kids that belonged to the owners of the white stores would come out, and we'd play and play all day. And when I was about six, that stopped, or seven.

Q: Yeah. I was a governness for the governor of the State of Louisiana, and he had an eleven year old daughter when I went to work for them. And when she turned twelve, they told me I had to call her Miss Linda.

Lipman: Miss. Yes.

Q: But I wouldn't call her name before I would call her miss. Were there any specific holidays that African-Americans celebrated that were not national holidays or they were not celebrated by the white community?

Lipman: There were special church celebrations. Yes. We went to the Methodist Church every Sunday. Oh, I have to tell you something strange. My father was Methodist, my mother was Presbyterian. So I wentn to the Methodist Church in the morning and the Presbyterian Church in the afternoon. And we celebrated religious holidays. Yeah, but we celebrated them with other black people from the south. There was the Emancipation Proclamation, it was January the first. We had a big program at the church about that. The church was the center of most of the happenings in the south, you know.

Q: What abaout the special holidays like Christmas and Easter?

Lipman: Yes.

Q: You talked about the Fourth of July. Did black folks celebrate those holidays? You know, make special efforts to celebrate those?

Lipman: Did they. Yeah. They made a big day out of Christmas. And I baked, well, my sister and I had learned to do different things. She baked pies and I baked cakes for Christmas. And we always had everything. We always had a lot of people come in. At Eastertime, it was the same thing with the ham, sweet potatoes.

Q: And special outfits for Easter.

Lipman: Oh. Don't mention it. Such gorgeous outfits. And I'd be so mad if somebody had a dress like mine.

Q: What about the use of intoxicants such as alcohol and drugs, etc.? Did you know of anybody who used those kinds of things?

Lipman: I didn't. I did not. Not down south where I come from. I didn't know much. I know there was a town drunk who was always drunk and alwya staggering around. But there was no drugs or anything.

Q: Did your father or any of the male members in your family smoke cigars or pipes or cigarettes, etc.

Lipman: My father didn't smoke for some reason. And the only person in my family who smoked was my younger brother, and he had stopped because he got cancer. But he didn't, my father didn't smoke or drink. But he had a brother who was sort of an alcoholic. And his brother used to live in Atlanta, Georgia, and he used to say, I'd rather be a street post in Atlanta, Georgia, than the tallest tree in LaGrange. [Laughter]

Q: What about the use of snuff and chewing tobacco?

Lipman: Oh, the snuff, yes. Snuff, the lady who helped us do the washing, at the wash pot

outside, you know, where you boiled your clothes for washing over a fire. Oh, she was a snuff dipper I tell you. And my father chewed tobacco. Yes.

Q: Oh yeah. Yeah, we had one of those wash pots in the backyard. And somebody had to go and build a fire on the wash day.

Lipman: I remember killing pigs too. And making crackling.

Q: Oh really. Yeah, we did too, we did too.

Lipman: We had chickens, and all of that.

Q: We did too. We raised chickens and guineas and there was, you know, you'd wait for special kinds of days as far as the weather to kill hogs. And then you may kill three or four or more at a time. And I can remember seeing them strung up. You know, they'd put up these special poles, with the poles across the top and hang them up there.

Lipman: We had a smoke house.

Q: We did too. They would first salt the meat down for so long, and then take it out and hang it up and smoke it. Keep the fire going day and night to smoke the meat. And it would never spoil.

Lipman: No.

Q: You could keep it indefinitely and it would never spoil.

Lipman: It was wonderful. We had a cow until the town made us get rid of it.

Q: Oh really. We used to have cows. And I was the, after I grew, I guess I must have been about

ten years old when I first had to start to milk the cow. And we would have three or four cows. I'd get so tired of milking cows cause I had to get up and milk the cows before I could go to school in the morning. And I can remember one day, we had this one cow, we were just breaking her in. I think it was first calf. And I was milking the cow. My father was sitting on the front step. And I'm out in the cowpen milking the cows. And the cow kicked the bucket over.

Lipman: Oh. With the milk in it?

Q: Yeah. And I got up and got me a rail. I was gonna beat the daylights. And he just sat there and said, nope, don't you hit that cow.

Lipman: Don't hit it. Oh, man. I know you were mad.

Q: I was so angry because he wouldn't let me beat up that cow.

Lipman: I think, you know, I think my father may have been a good farmer, but he was a builder, you know. There were some things that is not quite the same with the rest of the people. Like he was a very good artisan, I guess, a builder. And when he had a joint venture with a white lumber yard, and anytime they built anything that they couldn't finish or that was wrong, he had to go tear it down and build it over. That was his specialty.

Q: My fathre was a brick mason too.

Lipman: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. That's what he did. You know, he was no kind of farmer. My mother grew up on a farm. But my father was, he grew up in the city. And when he became an adult, he was a brick mason. He used to travel all over Louisiana.

Lipman: Yeah. My father traveled all over. And in his last days, he was stricken some miles from home. I was in Europe and my sister told me about it.

Q: Oh, we have more in common than we knew about. What about medical practices do you remember in the south? You know, a lot of us, most of us, there was not too many medical doctors around. We survived with home remedies, etc.

Lipman: That's right. So did we. But, see, my father had the drug store. And the pharmacist was a big help. I think there was one black doctor around, but there was also white doctors that we went to. My mother died in a segregated white hospital. I remember that. But for the most part, we seemed to keep well. There were midwives instead of doctors for women who were having babies. My mother had her first one with a midwife.

Q: When you came to Newark, though, there were none of those, not much of that being done. Most babies were born in the hospital. And if you got sick, there was always access to a doctor.

Lipman: Right.

Q: Either the doctor, the hospital, or the clinic. There was always medical services available so we didn't have to depend on, so much on home remedies and midwives.

Lipman: Yes. Some of those home remedies do pretty well though still.

Q: Oh yes. Oh yes. Do you remember any specific home remedies that they used?

Lipman: I was trying to think when you were talking about it. Like, my mother used to. Well, I don't know. Maybe we do that same thing. She used to put cold towels over my, wet, all over, when my sister had a fever. I still did that with my daughter.

Q: Oh really. [Laughter]

Lipman: My daughter had a tendency to have a high fever. And instead of dumping her in the bathtub like some people do to bring down the fever, I just layed cold towels on her. It worked.

Q: Yeah. Well, you know, I still believe that ninety-nine percent of medical effectiveness has to do with what you believe.

Lipman: Right. It's in your mind. Whether it helps you out or not.

Q: Did you ever hear of anybody in the south who believed in fixing?

Lipman: Oh goodness. Yes. [Laughter] I got to tell you there was one block. It was the block around. I lived in a black neighborhood, of course, in the south. It was segregated de facto I guess. And around the corner from us there was a strange little hut. We thought it was a hut We were afraid to go by it in the daytime or in the nighttime. Inside there lived Miss Sarah Holt who was, I guess she was a mental case. But she used to powder her face very white and she used to wear real thin white garments. And when you'd see her coming down the street, you would run like crazy because you didn't kow what was that coming. Yeah. That was. And then there was this woman who said, you know, she could fix you up. Put a spell on you and everything. I guess she believed in and the dead chickens and all of that.

Q: Oh I heard. And the seven sisters in New Orleans and all of that kind.

Lipman: But we didn't have it. At least I didn't know it that strong. But it was there.

Q: I knew of people who believed wholeheartedly in that kind of stuff. If they got a stomach ache, they'd swear somebody had fixed them.

Lipman: Put it on them.



Q: As a matter of fact, I had an aunt who believed in it. And I always thought she was a little out of her tree.

Lipman: A little out of her tree. What an expression.

Q: What about pets as you grew up? Did you have pets?

Lipman: Had several. Had some pets when I was growing up, and when my children was growing up too. I thought we lived in a menagerie. I tell you. We had so many pets. Had a pet goat. Billy goat.

Q: Really?

Lipman: Yes. And, of course, we always had dogs and cats. And my children had gerbils. I have a famous picture of my son with a gerbil when he was about seven. Inside the house he had an ant farm. Oh.

Q: Had an ant farm in the house?

Lipman: Yes. I thought my daughter would be a veterinarian. She used to work at the Newark Museum when they had the live animals down there. And she used to wrap the snakes around her neck. She has a thing with animals. They all seem to like her. She rides horses. Everybody takes, all the animals take to her.

Q: Was there any such thing as juvenile crime in the south as you grew up or when you lived there?

Lipman: Not like the juvenile crime you hear about here. I have a colleague, senator, he says, when the judges let the ten year old children out in Newark from having stole a car, they let them go home, and they steal two more cars on the way home. Now, we didn't have that kind of

juvenile crime. I don't know. There seemed to be a different atmosphere when we came up, even from when my children came up. There wasn't a different kind. I remember when we moved to Newark and my son thought he'd take a walk in Wickwake Park. He came back with his glasses broken and his sixty cents gone. Some kid had knocked him down in the park and broke his glasses. And he said, ma, what kind of people are these? I said, I don't know. You just have to be careful. So they took their dog walking with them next time.

Q: What was your perception of blacks helping each other --

Lipman: In the south?

Q: -- in the south and in Newark once you got here?

Lipman: Let me say that I think that people in the south were. I can't say more of a family cause if you are in a church, in a lodge, in a brotherhood of some kind in Newark, they help each other just like that. Just like the people in the south did. I am real surprised to see so many people raising money for scholarships for children to go to school. Even if it's a small organization, when they give a dinner or something, it's to help a child get to college or buy books or something like that. That's true of Newark. But you wouldn't, it isn't like the neighborhood helping you. I remember when my son died. I was just shocked at the people who came, you know, in and out. It was a real moving thing.

Q: What about race relations? How did you think overall race relations with whites in Newark compare to the relationship with whites in the south?

Lipman: Well, you see, in Newark I was grown up already when I approached them as an equal. And if they didn't treat me as an equal, I'm afraid I was sassy sometimes. But, you know, that was the way it was. When I was a freeholder, the freeholders were all older and they used to ask me where's the rest of your dress if my dress was short in style, you know, like it was. And all of that

And I used to feel like they were my fathers. But in the south, you're asking me to compare the south?

Q: Yeah. How do you remember race relations being in the south between the races?

Lipman: Not too good. They respected my father because he was able to produce a beautiful house, whatever it is that they wanted him to build. So they treated him. They'd come to the drugstore and sit with him and talk in the back room. But it was no usual camaraderie. For example, we weren't allowed to go to the movies. But they invited my father and his family. He wouldn't let us go. But they did invite us to sit upstairs. Oh yes. They did. But we didn't. Here it was a different thing. I was grown up. You know. And when they say something that wasn't right to me, I'd answer them back real fast. I've been interested in women getting ahead, you know, all of my life. And that's what I work on in the legislature.

Q: What about the way blacks treated each other in the south as compared to how blacks treated each other here in Newark?

Lipman: I think this crime is black on black in Newark. Whole lot of the times. And I guess, you know, down south it is not the same as when I was coming up. I guess there's crime there. And oh they have beer parlors and all like that where the young folks hang out now in the south the same. And I guess there's, there's not as much crime maybe, but there's crime. Cause all over. But I found out, I found that people usually treated you differently when I was growing up than after I'm grown here now. There is no camaraderie really. I mean, I have a way of, they used to call me granny tooth. I'd smile at people just to see if I can get them to smile back at me. Most of the time it works, you know.

Q: I do the same thing.

Lipman: To see if they will smile or give me a friendly greeting or something. And they do.

Q: How were you received, now, when you first came to Newark and you moved on Elizabeth Avenue, there were black folk and white folk living in that same neighborhood in the same building as you said before. How were you generally received by the African-American people?

Lipman: I can't remember having a very bad incident with anybody, you know, with any of them. I guess I was so busy trying to keep my children together and keeping out of the way of people. Cause there were some bad kids, you know.

Q: What about attitudes? I mean, you know, when you live in such close proximity with people and you run into people every day, most people have their own personalities, they have their own life, they have their own concerns.

Lipman: Some of them were nasty, disgruntled and all of that. And I'm sure that some of them must use drugs too. And that's when they go out of their mind and do some strange things. But, fortunately, I think there's only been one murder that I can remember.

Q: In all those years?

Lipman: In all those years. It's always somebody's girlfriend. You know, something emotional. Some guy was living with another man's girlfriend. He opened the door and the guy beat him up and he died.

Q: What was your very first job in Newark?

Lipman: I've always been in politics. And I always taught at Essex County College. I used to be an administrator there. But then I moved to the faculty side. I thought I'd like teaching better. And I'm a better teacher than I am an administrator. I used to be assistant to the president. But I'd rather be a professor.

Q: How long have you worked at Essex County College?

Lipman: The same number of years I've been here. Since 72.

Q: I didn't even know Essex County College was that old.

Lipman: Yeah.

Q: What were the working conditions like at Essex County College? I can remember when Essex County College had its bad days and its good days economically, and I don't know whether.

Lipman: We always had trouble economically. It can't, because it's a strange creature. You know, it's an open door college. Anybody who has a certain amount of education, and if they don't, you know, they have to take a prelim course, is supposed to be able to go there. It's the last hope of the man who missed out going to college or the woman who never had a chance to go to school and everything. So I think that if the creature of the state is supposed to pay one third, almost up to one half, but the state doesn't pay nearly one third. The county has to come in. It's a county college. And fill in some. And then you have to charge tuition for the other. But the state has always retrenched on what it gives the college, and it's always in trouble economically. But we have managed to build and we teach in a beautiful edifice. I can't get over how beautiful it is every day when I go there.

Q: It is. Outstanding.

Lipman: Yes. It is outstanding.

Q: How much do you think politics has to do with the, whatever problems the college might have?

Lipman: A lot of. It's a lot to do with in politics. When I was a freeholder for that short period of

time, we had a freeholder there that said education should be free from politics. You know, you shouldn't. I used to hear him say that all the time. But it never is. You always have to argue and negotiate for what you need. And I'm forever trying to get something extra for our county colleges. County colleges are the stepchildren of the higher education world. They're the real stepchildren. But that is, I think that when students go through there and they see they can go on to a four year college, that kind of awakening is wonderful to see. My class now at Essex County College, everybody works in the daytime, and then they come to a six o'clock class in the evening. It goes for three hours and it isn't easy to stay awake after you work. But they're all interesting. I have a wonderful class.

Q: In general, what are the working conditions like at Essex County College among faculty members?

Lipman: Well, I tell you. I'm away a lot. So I'm not deeply into the wrangling or the good will even of the college, but they seem, there's a high level of intelligence in the college faculty that, you know, they're able to go and teach anywhere I would think. And they seem to, they were instrumental in choosing Zachary Yamba to be their leader. And before, when someone outside chose the leader, you always had friction in the college between the faculty and the administration. But Zachary Yamba seems to run that college very well. Cause he came from the faculty in the college.

Q: What is the ethnic makeup of the faculty at?

Lipman: Essex. Everything you could think of. There's African-American, gee, I don't know the background as to the area, there's Chinese. Oh, I couldn't tell you. They come from all over.

Q: And they work well together?

Lipman: They work well together.

Q: Do they speak their native languages? Of course, they have to speak English.

Lipman: Among themselves. Well, you know I have, I have Haitians in my class that I speak French with. When you have a fellow, a person from Puerto Rico or somewhere, you speak your own language.

Q: Have you learned to speak other languages other than French? You used to.

Lipman: Well, I learned Spanish, but every time I think I'm going to converse in Spanish, it comes out in French. But, you know, I can manage to understand when Spanish people are talking to me. Except I don't understand Creole. It's an entirely different French.

Q: Did you ever do any casual or part-time work?

Lipman: Yes, when I was with child. I taught at Montclair High School. They re-educated me to teach the neurologically impaired. And so I went over and taught during the day to teach neurologically impaired children. Children who read from left to right instead of from right to left. Who couldn't visualize the words on the page. It's very hard. Some of them were excellent in math, but they couldn't read. And so we devised, my ex-husband helped me devise stories to help them learn to read. It was very interesting work.

Q: Those were, some of those were kids that they refer to as being dyslexics.

Lipman: Dyslexic, that's what they were. And surprisingly, I never had a black student at Montclair High School.

Q: Do you know of any black kids who are dyslexic.

Lipman: Yeah. The fellow who, let's see, Bill Cosby, what is his name, Cosby. His son was a

dyslexic, and he went to that famous school in Vermont, and he overcame his handicap. And he had, he's training to teach people who. It's not that they aren't trainable. One young man I know who went to Montclair High School is now in charge of a whole chain of hotels. And he couldn't even read when he was a junior.

Q: Senator, were you ever unemployed? If so, for how long and how did you manage during those times?

Lipman: I was unemployed when I was pregnant, with babies, and I had a lot of troubles paying the bills. I did. But, and when they were two and three years old, I went to the college. I've been in there a long time.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

Q: Senator, I believe I had just asked you what were the common occupations for black men and women in Newark when you first came here?

Lipman: Well, you know, maybe I'm not a good person to ask that because I always taught at a college and most of my friends were teachers, doctors and lawyers. And most of my friends were black too. Were African-Americans. And so, but you know, in going around the districts that I'm over, there are a lot of people who are working in labor. I was in Beth Israel Hospital and I thought Beth Israel Hospital, Newark Beth Israel Hospital, must employ half of my wards. And UMDNJ on the other hand must employ half of the Central Ward.

Q: Well, I suppose that has a lot to do with where they're located. But I think the, when I first came to Newark, it was the early 50s. And most women, most black women, were doing domestic work. And most black men were laborers.

Lipman: That's right.



Q: You know, there were all kinds of factories here in Newark, all kind of industry.

Lipman: Well, that happened when I was in the south. Most women when they worked outside the home were either domestic workers or teachers.

Q: What kind of, as time went on, as you spent time in Newark, what kind of occupational changes happened for African-Americans?

Lipman: As I spent time in Newark. Well, I think the housing is now being improved. The changes that I see from the projects, amazing. You know, when people get their own house and everything. You're talking about jobs?

Q: Yeah. Because as the economy changed and jobs moved out, factories closed, and white folk moved out of Newark and black folk migrated from the south or other places.

Lipman: Quite a few of them had a lot of things to do with changes. There's a lot of unemployment here. You wouldn't believe how much.

Q: Yes I would.

Lipman: Yes you would. People just can't. I know that when people lose their jobs in the house that I live in they come and speak to me about how hard it is to find something. But generally, you know, if you look hard enough, you're able to find something. How long you look is another story.

Q: Now we're gonna kind of change our direction here. What church do you belong to?

Lipman: Bethany Baptist Church. That's the church I belong to. I don't go very often. I'm not a real good church goer to tell you the truth. I know you were surprised to see me took so long at the Zion holders.

Q: I really was. I expected you to leave almost as soon as you had made your presentation. And the reason I looked at you the way that I did because I go to Bethany and I never knew that you were a member there.

Lipman: I go there.

Q: Ahhh. It's nice to know. Okay. There'll be some changes made.

Lipman: Yes mam. You're gonna call me up and take me to church. [Laughter] I usually on weekends that's the time we're asked to come here and come there. I bet I visited quite a few churches in Newark. Having been asked to come or presenting something at the main service and all.

Q: Have you ever been active in the church, even when you were younger or?

Lipman: Oh. Goodness gracious. I used to be the pianist for the church. I used to stay there half the day.

Q: This was when you were down south?

Lipman: This was when I was down south. I was in the choir at the college, and we did all the services there. I have always been very active until I got into politics. And then it proved that I had so many places to go on weekends, I don't always go to church I'm afraid.

Q: Well, in addition to being a pianist at the church when you were in the south, did you, were there any other church activities that you participated in?

Lipman: We didn't have that many outlets in the south. I mean, you know, when I used to play for the choir. Junior church and all of that. But we didn't have anything like [?] or anything like that.

We had school activities. And, of course, my school was black. But my sister's children came up in the south more recently, like when mine are growing up in Newark, hers were growing up in LaGrange. She hadn't left Georgia then. And they went to an integrated high school.

Q: Did you ever, did you ever hold any offices like of youth organizations in the church? Like the junior ushers or Sunday School secretary, etc.

Lipman: Yes. Absolutely. My mother was the Sunday School treasurer. And she used to keep all the pennies in a great big jar at home. I can remember that.

Q: How much have you participated in social and cultural activities in Newark?

Lipman: Quite a few. Because of the job I hold, I guess. We are ceremonial people, you know, we present resolutions, cultural things. Go and speak words of welcome and this and that. So I go to quite a few cultural, conferences, churches. Lately the Million Man March has been inviting me quite a bit to go to their functions.

Q: Do you belong to or participate in any other community organizations, such as social clubs or the Eastern Star or any of those kinds of organizations?

Lipman: I'm a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Sort of delinquent I guess cause I haven't been recently. But, you know, if you have committees to go to in Trenton, and I'm on the budget and appropriations committee. By example, we go Mondays and Wednesdays, and Wednesdays I have to rush back and teach my class. And the rest of the days I'm going to some board meeting or something like that. And, well, it's a busy life.

Q: Did you ever know though of any, in the African-American community, where we had organized social groups such as bridge clubs or choral societies or literary societies? Did we ever have any of those kinds in?

Lipman: I only know that sororities for the women and there's church clubs for women, all kinds of church clubs, and the ladies aids, you know, and all those groups that they talk to. And the PTA, that's another. I used to be president of the PTA in Montclair when my children were little. That's how I got into politics to tell you the truth, through the PTA.

Q: Oh really?

Lipman: Yes. Sure did. We had an outstanding snow storm in Montclair. I lived about a block from the elementary school where my children were in school. There's a big garbage trucks used to come into the school lot and pile the snow that they collected on the street. The snow had all kinds of things in it, unmentionable things, cause they picked it up on the street. And when the children came out to play, they were going into that big snow field, and we mothers went downtown to see the founding fathers of the town, and we talked to them. And they said, they moved the snow finally. Well, first we had to make a mother chain so they couldn't get into the school yard. And they had pictures of us in the newspaper. And so they told me you should be in politics. I tried.

Q: Do you remember anyone that you might consider as having been outstanding members of any of those organizations that we talked about or any outstanding persons who participated with you in PTA or whatever other kind of community activities might have been?

Lipman: Yes friends. It seemed that we integrated schools in Montclair when my children were little and I was living there. And the white mothers came together with the black mothers and the PTA presidents were exchanged. I'm not saying that I didn't have a hard time in that school with my children because I did. I found out that they were being tested special to see if they had any physical disabilities of any kind, you know, without our knowledge, without them telling us. But, all in all, it was a very good experience, you know, to deal for the first time with the white women.

Q: What was the ratio of black to white in the school?

Lipman: I guess, let me see, Montclair should be about half black.

Q: Now. But then.

Lipman: Then. It was a little less than that, about a third. And we integrated the schools. That was a, that was a good experience I had. That's when I got accustomed to working with a lot of white women.

Q: How much have you participated in political activities.

Lipman: Oh my.

Q: That's your forte now I know.

Lipman: You're asking me that. [Laughter] Well, the legislature's supposed to be a part time job, but you're on call anytime. They call you. I guess I have participated in many political functions, you know, all the time. If not in Essex County, in Union County. That's my other county that I belong in. And there's always someplace to go. Anytime you can mention, there's something going on. My schedule goes on and on and on. And, of course, I can't go to all those things. And I have to pick out things that I can make. And, unfortunately now, I can't make anything on Wednesdays or Mondays, you know, when something is doing that way cause I'm in Trenton all day. And so, yes, I participate in galas of all kinds, conferences, and so forth. I have made some very good friends through this.

Q: And you have a lot of influence among politicians, as well as community people.

Lipman: Oh, I wish I could say I had a lot of influence.

Q: You do. I happen to know that.

Lipman: You do? You know that?

Q: You're too modest to say it, but it's.

Lipman: Well, let me tell you, most of the politicians are male. Now the freeholder board has five women in it. That's a very unusual state of affairs. When I went there, they had like one woman in it. But, and for a long time, I was the only woman, oh I don't know, I've been there so long. But most of the time I've been in the Senate, that's since 73, I have been the only woman in the Senate. Now and then I have some colleagues, but most of the time the political world is predominantly male. And they send for you when they want you to be in the meeting. And other times they have the meeting without you.

Q: What is your party affiliation?

Lipman: Party affiliation is Democrat. My father was a Republican cause he thought Abraham Lincoln was Republican that he should be a Republican. But I consciously chose to be a Democrat. Because when I went to school and took political science, you know, Democrats seemed to be more liberal, more embracing of African-Americans, all races, and it just seemed to me to be camaraderie on the Democratic side.

Q: Aside from the regular duties of a State Senator, have you played any specific role in the Democratic Party?

Lipman: I was a freeholder. What you mean? I was a town chairman when I was in Montclair. I haven't been a town chairman in Newark. There's a chairman in each ward, and we have, I have so many elected officials living right around me, I'd have to fight somebody to get a position in the party. I would love to do something like that if I could. I was a good chairman when I was in Montclair. But in Newark there's a plethora of politicians. There's somebody always, there's always too many people to do too few things.

Q: I'm going to ask you this, but I don't know if this question is answerable or not. What do you consider to be the major accomplishments of political activity in Newark?

Lipman: Political activity in Newark.

Q: Accomplishments. What have they really accomplished?

Lipman: I don't know. The town is being rebuilt. Newark is being rebuilt. I guess that.

Q: But is that political or economic?

Lipman: I don't know. We've had trying times with some politicians. It seems like there's a constant risk to catch politicians in wrong doing. Of course, the newspapers are ready to snap it up. And you have to turn yourself to investigate anybody any time. You know, you could get a complex and go around with your head hanging down if you wanted to. But I think, I think that what Newark has shown is that African-Americans can lead. They can lead and they can successfully lead a big city. That's what, I think that's what they've accomplished. You know, there's an old saying that if you have a job and there's a procession of people in the job, when the black person takes over the job, the job goes down. But that's not true actually in Newark.

Q: Do you remember, who do you remember that you would consider as having been an outstanding political leader in Newark?

Lipman: Well, when I first came here, you know, Kennie Gibson was the first black mayor. I thought he was an outstanding mayor. And then Sharpe James who was a teacher at Essex County College has become a good mayor, I think. Allen Tucker, you know, is leading the black bishop's conference who has tried very hard. You mean the people who are in the council now.

Q: Now I mean any, of all of your years in Newark in being a part of and aware of Newark

politics.

Lipman: Well, Garry Harris was kind of outstanding. At least we always thought he should have been a minister the way he talks, but he tuned out to be a politician. Oh there are many outstanding people. I just can't think of them right now. If you give me a little, you know, I could remember things that I have been through.

Q: Of all of the things that we have talked about, your life experiences from the time you began in LaGrange, Georgia, was it? And up to now, have you collected photographs and all kinds of, you know, like awards or?

Lipman: Memorabilia.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. Memorabilia.

Lipman: Well, I have a great collection of plaques that people have given me. They've given all kinds of things. I have some at my house. I have some, I have most of them in the office place. People have been very generous with giving me things. Yes, I have collected photographs. I have a large collection, old and new photographs. I don't know sometimes maybe you want to do something in the museum I'll be glad to let you have anything I have.

Q: Well, that was going to be my next question.

Lipman: Question. Yes.

Q: Would you be willing to share some of those memorabilia with us when we establish our museum, our cultural center downtown?

Lipman: Absolutely. Well, once I was fortunate enough to be the object of a display in the



Newark library. It was very nice. They did a very nice job. It was really nice.

Q: How much have you participated in community activities, and what community organizations, for example, like neighborhood groups or civic organizations? Did you belong to, you talked about your activities in the PTA in Montclair, but were there other community organizations that you were a part of?

Lipman: In Montclair?

Q: Anywhere. Newark or.

Lipman: Well, I was on the board at United Hospitals which is now defunct. I had started years ago there. You know they had that move to put some community people on the board there. And I went on with Mrs. Gebhardt. Four of us at the time. And I'm now part of [?] New Jersey which is a food distribution program. We also, you have to put in a number of volunteer hours to get the food. I was with, well, you know, I don't really belong to the PTA, but anytime they invite me I go. That's what I usually do. Go places where I'm invited, not actually be. It's hard to, it's hard for me to say that Bethany is my choice of a church, because the church in my neighborhood over there doesn't like to hear me say that.

Q: What church is that?

Lipman: Reverend, gee, I can't think of his name right now. But Mt. Calvary.

Q: Oh, Reverend Mattson.

Lipman: Mattson.

Q: Yeah. Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. I used to go there.

Lipman: Yeah. It's a nice church. It's a very nice church. I still go there.

Q: Aside from being a consumer of regular goods and services, in what ways did you participate in the economic life of the community?

Lipman: Well, I had this seminar once a month where I tried to train contractors of all kinds, you know, everybody who comes there. Architects and all that got their specialty. How to run a good business, how to operate a good business. And I'm happy to say that a number of them, the businesses, have turned out rather well in Newark. So they are adding to the economic structure of Newark. I think I should point to that as one of the things that I'm most proud of. Recently I just got advised that I'm to be the women's business advocate of the year. The women in the business too. All kinds of people come to the seminar. And I'm pleased to try to produce for them. I have a task force on women's issues and children's issues. And this task force is usually made up of all of the, not all of them, but a number of the agencies which give service to women and children in Newark. Not only women and children, but for example, Newark's emergency services for families. All that make up. And when we have a meeting, they tell me what is wrong, what I need to do, what I need to go to Trenton to ask for, what's wrong. And I'm really hoping that I will be successful about the new work first. That's quite a worry. I don't know how we're gonna do it. But I'm beginning to see the community respond. They're trying to respond. If people would listen to those who have been doing the services, and not to try to privatize them and give them to some big company. That's the style these days, you know. The governor is very fond of privatizing everything. I'll give you an example. We privatized the medical services to prisoners in the prison. And how there are more prisoners dying of things you would never think they'd die of than ever before because they aren't able to get the. See, before they privatized them and gave them to a special group to do, which group's not only in the prison, the prison people, the people who run the prisons, had to provide these medical services. And in my estimation, they were a whole lot better. We have a number of prisoners that have AIDS. You know, they need special attention. They were getting the services on a much better basis than they are when they have to wait two and three days to see a doctor. A fellow had his hand caught in the door, and there was

two days before he saw a doctor, you know.

Q: Did you ever own or operate your own business?

Lipman: Not so you could notice. No. No, I don't think. I think I've always been a teacher. I would like to operate my own business. I'm too busy trying to figure out if people operate theirs well.

Q: Did you ever purchase stock in any black owned businesses?

Lipman: Yes. We all owned stock in Radio Station out there before it went kaput.

Q: Which radio station was that?

Lipman: The one that's out on Union Avenue.

Q: WNJR.

Lipman: WNJR.

Q: Okay.

Lipman: We all owned stock in that.

Q: Were there any other black businesses you bought stock in?

Lipman: No. Not that I can remember. Let's see. My daughter's business. [Laughter] I've got lots of stock in that. Practically own that.

Q: When you first came to Newark, how did you get information on the news and events of the community? Did you read a black newspaper, if so which one? Did you listen to black oriented radio, if so which one?

Lipman: You just spoke of it. WNJR. Yeah, the black oriented radio. Which they invited us to be on quite a bit. Also how did I get news? Well, there's the regular news. Then we had the Afro-American newspaper. We had another, I can't think of the name of it, but another newspaper that was.

Q: The Pittsburgh Courier was one I know.

Lipman: Pittsburgh Courier. Yeah, we got information from that one. I had in every ward where I have, I have a certain number of aides in the wards, and they come back and tell me what's wrong. You know, that's what good about having the county committee. Cause from any ward, anybody in any district can call you and report something wrong, and they tell you what's happening over here.

Q: Do you feel that the white media has been fair?

Lipman: Less than kind.

Q: To the African-American community, huh?

Lipman: I'm not a great fan of the white media. I think they have been less than kind. Most of what you see reported. My daughter wanted to stop looking at the news for a while. She says, Ma, all you see are murders and all you see are black people being dragged into jail for the murders and thrown in prison and so. I don't think that the justice system is the best that we have. And I guess it does the best we can. But I don't think that's fair to African-Americans either. I used to say when I was in the Hall of Records, if I could just blindfold the judge so he wouldn't

see that the lawyer is black and that the prisoner is black, then maybe some of these juveniles would get better treatment. Because just go in a prison, just go in a young person's prison, all you see is black faces. Occasionally, a latino face. Lots of latino faces now. It used to make me almost cry to go to the prison just to see the black faces all around.

Q: Well, that's still the case. I spent that five years out in Northern State Prison and at least ninety percent of the persons incarcerated there were black males between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four.

Lipman: That's where the flower of our youth is.

Q: What about the relationship between black Newark and other black communities? Has there been a relationship between people who live in Newark and people who live in other, like Irvington, East Orange, Maplewood?

Lipman: Oh I think there's quite a good feeling. I mean, Irvington is not part of my district, but I feel like it is. I'm over there a lot. East Orange. The Oranges. West Orange. They seem to be, when we all come together, we have a common aim. The temperament is different. Just like the temperament in every ward is different in Newark. I can't tell you, but I think there's a good exchange. Of course, there's always competition. Newark always wins because Newark is the biggest and the best. Yeah.

Q: Have you ever met any outstanding African-American leaders who did not live in Newark? And people who had, perhaps, some national reputation or had accomplished something noteworthy.

Lipman: Quite a few of those. You know, you go to conventions and conferences and so forth.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

Q: I had just asked Senator whether or not you, what outstanding blacks you might have met in the City of Newark?

Lipman: In the City of Newark?

Q: Yeah.

Lipman: Oh, well Miss Height was here too. The most recent one was [?] Ajimi who is now head of the NAACP, the National NAACP. Jessie Jackson. You name the politician. Jessie Jackson, Jr. I've had part of the congress to come and talk for me at my breakfasts, and we met them through Congressman Donald Payne, Congressman Randall. Oh yes, everybody comes to Newark. I tell you. The baseball stars, the football stars, the basketball stars.

Q: What do you remember about such public servants as the police department, the fire department and social workers in Newark? And my question there is do you remember when or if there were blacks employed in those agencies when you first came here?

Lipman: I know that the council was white. Since I've been here, these years that I've been here, African-Americans can get in the police force and fire department. I've had a lot of, you know, you do a lot of recommendations for people to get in these places. You have to work especially hard to get admitted to law school and to medicine, professions. Yes, there's quite a struggle. And outstand firemen, there are a number of course. John Caulfield because he was doing so well. He taught me a lot about the fire department. When you go to services now in City Hall, [voice too low to hear]

Q: I believe Senator Caulfield was director of the Newark Fire Department before he became a state senator, wasn't it?

Lipman: And he was still active. Yes.

Q: But now, he was a white guy. But my concern is when and how many blacks were eventually employes in both the police department and the fire department.

Lipman: Well, you know there's a lot more black ones in the police department. And you see a lot of black faces there and latino faces. Especially the new groups that the mayor just brought in and he had interns, or if you can call them that, people who are training to be police officers. Before they even go to the strict training, they go to police officers go to. So I think that thar part has opened up. There are black officers and latino officers in there. But as I said before, I don't know about that project. And the same goes for women. You don't see that many women. Now this young group that just came in, you saw women among them in the police department. No, you see, there's sort of built in discrimination in the fire department because you have to be a big guy. You have to be able to wear all that heavy stuff and carry a body over your shoulder or something like that. And that's how they discriminated out of that. You have to weight a hundred and what seventy-five.

Q: What about social workers? And the reference there is to those persons who deliver services to people who are on public assistance more or less now. Most of them now are black because white folk became afraid to work among black folk in Newark. So when you first, when it first came to your attention, do you remember whether there were black people, black social workers?

Lipman: There were some white social workers, but they mostly worked inside the department downtown. And then they went home in the evening.

Q: To the suburbs.

Lipman: Yes. Those, most of the social workers I know, and they call them family service workers now, are black and have been black. I know the ones who do the, the psychologists for the schools, who travel around and go visit families, are now practically all black.

Q: In those early years, Senator, when African-American people got into trouble either with the law or whatever kind of problems they might have had, to whom did they go for help?

Lipman: That's how I spend my weekends. I used to. On the phone. Trying to get somebody out of jail. I call someone I know who might be able. Or a bail bondsmen or something. They call their representative. And I'm sure that the councilmen in Newark get much more of it than I do, but I get a fair share.

Q: So it's to public elected officials that most people turn when they have problems that they can't solve.

Lipman: You'd be surprised. I have phone logs every day full of problems that people. Small problems that seem to be able to be solved easily have been going on for a long time. You know, like, we got a call from a woman who moved in an apartment, a one room apartment, when she was married. And then her sister died and she took her sister's babies in. Her daughter who was not with her came in and wanted to live with her husband. All this in a one room apartment. To get her life improved.

Q: How do you think the black community in Newark is generally perceived by others? Other than the black folk who live here, how do you think other people perceive the black community?

Lipman: Except for those who come here to work and who know black people, I find that there's still a lot of prejudice about black people who live in Newark. For example, there's, in the legislature, even there, you can hear it on the floor. When people talk, you can recognize prejudice. They think everybody is a crook, corrupt, and so forth. And then you have to feel like standing up, screaming at them. No, that's not so. But, generally, they try to give some sort of similar respect if they know you represent these people. But recently a senator from Morris County just walked in, do you remember that, he was going to take over saying what the council should make and all that stuff. And cut their salaries down because they were too high. And he



represented Morris County. So I felt constrained to write a letter to the newspaper and say, go home buddy. We can take care of this.

Q: I did not remember that. And I guess it's just as well that I didn't. Other than white store owners and other whites with a vested economic interest in Newark, do you recall any other whites having an interest in the black community?

Lipman: There are some whites who do. The ones who work in the hospitals, for example. Let's see. Who had an actual interest in the good of human kind.

Q: Right Other than people who come to Newark to make money, who invest their money in Newark and take out more than they invested, do you know of anybody who have any human interest in the black community?

Lipman: Yes. Priests. {laughter} And rabbis. Church going people. We have churches from out of town who come to the park and youth board and feed great masses people. Then our own Mt. Carmel.

Q: Do you know of any incidents involving racial discrimination in Newark?

Lipman: Do I know of any incidents?

Q: Any specific incidents involving racial discrimination in Newark that you either experienced or witnessed?

Lipman: Some police brutality. Discrimination. I saw them beat up some young people down the next corner from my apartment house. I thought that was awful. The young men were unarmed, but they were just on the corner. Got out of their cars and beat them up. I thought that was uncalled for. I mean just a sharp tone of voice. You don't have to pull your gun on

somebody and hold them down to the ground with your gun in his ear to make him behave.

Discrimination in jobs. We have discrimination all over. They have to tell you about it, you know, before you can do anything about it. People are discriminated in many ways. That's one of my main functions to protest discrimination. We have some in Newark too.

Q: Well, I remember when I first came here, there was a Child's restaurant on the corner of Card Place.

Lipman: They didn't want you to go in there.

Q: Didn't want you to go there. And that was the most overt. And I had that personal experience. I went there one day. Been shopping all day long. I was tired. I just wanted a Coke. And I walked in there and I stood there, and nobody in there. Finally, I got the message. They don't want you here. Nobody ever looked at. Took a second. Just walked out. There was nothing else to do.

Lipman: My goodness. Well, that has never happened to me in Newark I don't think when I went in a place. That's because Newark is all, what is it sixty percent African-American?

Q: Now?

Lipman: Yes.

Q: It's probably more than that.

Lipman: No, it's about sixty-five percent. You'd be surprised. East Orange is ninety-nine percent African-American. But Newark has, you know, Portuguese, latinos.

Q: Over the years Newark has changed back the other way because a lot of people moved into the

North Ward. And when they started building these new developments, like the Society Hill, a lot of white folk kind of snuck in.

Lipman: Don't forget the East Ward. University Heights.

Q: Right. But now, you know, there has been, it used to be quite often in the news about police brutality and the way white officers treated black folk for no obvious reason other than the fact that they were black.

Lipman: People come to our office and tell us stories about what happened. We protest.

Q: What do you remember about the Mayor of Springfield Avenue? Quote, unquote Mayor of Springfield Avenue.

Lipman: The Mayor of Springfield Avenue. Who was he?

Q: Yeah.

Lipman: I don't remember. I've heard it before though. I heard that title before. I just can't remember who it is.

Q: Someone during one of these interviews when I asked that question, because I'm still curious about it because not many people seem to remember who the Mayor of Springfield Avenue was. And I think, I don't remember who the person was, mentioned it might have been this guy Jenkins that owned a record shop on Springfield Avenue. Near the intersection of South Tenth Street and Springfield Avenue. But that was the only person that I have come across.

Lipman: I've heard the Mayor of Springfield Avenue, the name before. I don't remember who he was.

Q: What do you remember regarding such local personalities as William Ashby. Wait a minute. William Ashby; Meyer Ellingstein, who was Newark's first Jewish mayor; Prosper Brewer; Irving Turner. Those persons. Do you remember any of those particularly?

Lipman: Who was the first one you mentioned?

Q: William Ashby.

Lipman: William Ashby. I just read his book. I don't think that I knew him so well.

Q: We're not talking about Harold Ashby now; we're talking about William Ashby.

Lipman: William Ashby.

Q: Okay.

Lipman: Harold Ashby I guess is the one I know then, not William Ashby.

Q: Probably. Cause Harold Ashby was the one that was associated with the Newark Board of Education.

Lipman: Harold Ashby. No. I knew the social worker too. The one who wrote the book.

Q: Okay.

Lipman: That's William Ashby.

Q: Okay.

Lipman: It's our community affairs building in Trenton is named the William Ashby Building, after him. So I thought I'd get his book and read it. A very wonderfully kind man who started a lot of things here.

Q: Including the Newark Essex Urban League.

Lipman: Yes. I remember that. Just read his book. He started the United Way, didn't he too? Or the United Fund or something. United Way.

Q: Of Essex County, perhaps, yeah.

Lipman: I didn't know Mayor Ellingstein. I heard of him though. But I didn't know him at all. The man that I heard the most about was the one that went to jail, right before Mayor Gibson.

Q: Hugh Adenizio.

Lipman: Hugh Adenizio. He was a congressman then.

Q: Right. Who made a comment before he left Washington that he could go to Newark and make a million dollars.

Lipman: And he did.

Q: And he did.

Lipman: Yeah. He did.

Q: What about Prosper Brewer who was supposed to be Newark's first black policeman?

Lipman: No. I didn't know about him. Sorry. I know some good black policemen though, let me tell you.

Q: What about Irving Turner who was the first black elected official in Newark?

Lipman: Yeah. I know more about him because I've heard stories so much about Irving Turner. He was the first black elected official. And then Calvin West who was the first black councilman, wasn't he? Or was Irving Turner?

Q: Irving Turner was the first black councilman. Calvin West was probably next.

Lipman: Calvin West was the first president of the council. Wasn't he president of the council.

Q: I don't remember whether he was.

Lipman: I thought he was. Something outstanding. But I've heard stories about Irving Turner ever since I've been in Newark. Very fine man.

Q: What do you remember regarding black institutions like hospitals or hotels and banks in Newark and where were they located?

Lipman: I guess there were some. I don't know to tell you the truth much about. I know about the University Hospital and Martlin. Martlin was a terrible place, you know, that's what they said. Everybody died that went there. But I didn't, there aren't, as in the south there are black hospitals, you know. Hospitals operated by almost all black people. Because when my older brother got married, we were traveling from Georgia to North Carolina, we had a wreck, an accident. And they wouldn't take us in the white hospital. We had to go some miles to a black hospital. Almost all of the hospitals I remember in Newark have been integrated. If they've been white hospitals. Hotels, black hotels. Well, there's Father Divine, that hotel on the corner.

Q: The Riviera Hotel.

Lipman: The Riviera Hotel. There are a number of black people there. I never lived there, but I heard about it.

Q: There was a Coleman Hotel. I remember when I first came here. Located someplace down the Central Ward.

Lipman: I don't know much about black owned hotels, but restaurants. We got them. The Stewart is still around.

Q: And her son opened up down.

Lipman: John.

Q: And then J&E down on Halsey Street. Yeah. A lot of black restaurants.

Lipman: We certainly have that.

Q: We have them to go and come.

Lipman: Restaurants and barbershops.

Q: Right. And bars.

Lipman: Oh yes. Bars. I used to think that the most of what we had in Newark were churches and bars. And you couldn't go hardly a block without seeing a church or a bar.

Q: What about, well, there have always been quite a number of black funeral directors in Newark

too. Did you know of any black banks?

Lipman: Not before City National.

Q: City National. Wasn't there a Bathoon Bank right there on Springfield Avenue.

Lipman: There was. I don't remember it. But I heard about it.

Q: Yeah. I remember when that bank was there. What do you recall regarding the kinds of music that one heard in black Newark? Do you remember listening to and/or seeing musicians perform jazz or gospel or the blues?

Lipman: Yes mam. I'm fond of jazz. My son was a jazz buff and he collected about a thousand albums which we gave to the library when he died. But yes we listened faithfully to WBTO. Although I wish they would get more modern jazz. [Laughter] And oh the music is wonderful. The gospel singers. Yes, the church choirs. The high school choruses and when they sing, you know, I don't know if any of them travel really, except the Boy's Chorus we have. All of these. I think that the, I don't know if the adage or something that all black people can sing, all African-Americans sing and dance. I think there's a lot to that because it just, they can make such a joyous sound when they want to. Either with instruments or voices. And I'm always so proud and so moved.

Q: Do you remember some of the night spots or some of the clubs that used to exist in Newark where black performers did work?

Lipman: No. When I came, I guess we had gone down to bars. With go go dancers and things like that. But, what's his name, Emiri Bharacha had in his basement, a club in his house.

Q: Oh he does now?



Lipman: Yeah. Where they read poetry and jazz and stuff like that.

Q: Have you ever gone there?

Lipman: Yes. Once. I went once with someone to hear poetry that night.

Q: Have you ever participated in any leisure time activities, such as maybe choral groups or any kind of collective activity, aside from your duties as teacher and politician?

Lipman: Not except board meetings. That's what I participate in. The way you said a collected group of people.

Q: Like quilting bees or gardening?

Lipman: One thing. I cannot sew.

Q: Movies. Did you ever like to go to movies?

Lipman: Oh I love movies. I really love movies. Yes. And I'm so glad that we go the theaters here back in Newark again.

Q: Yeah. So am I.

Lipman: Did you ever play any sports or any members of your family play sports?

Q: Tennis and croquet. No, we used to play croquet on the lawn. But we had a tennis court at my house. So we all learned to play tennis very well. My children were great horseback riders. And there was a stable in the North Ward when we first came to Newark and they were members. But they used to ride the horses in Montclair. So they went to that stable and they rode the

horses. They became instructors. Now they were eleven and twelve years old. And this guy had people who were learning to ride horses, and they'd take them off to Branchberg Park. They would ride through the traffic with me holding my breath.

Q: Did you remember the Newark Eagles baseball team?

Lipman: I don't remember the Eagles. You know, I'm not a great sports buff. I think more I like to read. But I do, I have participated in ceremonies for the Eagles. And just recently they celebrated them in Sussex County for them. They had a ceremony and they had anybody who was interested. And, of course, I went up there. The senator from Sussex invited me.

Q: Were there any other black athletic events that you attended?

Lipman: Athletic events. I'm not great at athletic events. We go to the tennis matches and to, what do you call that, soccer matches. When they play. Baseball game. The college games, you know, Rutgers. Basketball. Everybody has a team. The prosecutor has a team. Basketball players. Everybody has something. This is a great sports town too by the way. You know we're getting a new stadium.

Q: Are we getting it or are they still fighting it?

Lipman: They're not fighting it. It's done now. They voted two to one for it.

Q: Oh. Okay.

Lipman: Yes mam.

Q: Well, we have to talk about the parking situation down there, later, at another time. What do you recall regarding the seamy side of Newark life?

Lipman: Oh, honey, I didn't ever see too much of that. [Laughter] I really didn't. I know that I've been to a lot of balls and parties where there was cabarets and you went in and you campaigned and you came out. I didn't stay too long around to see what it was like. But that was when I first came to Newark and took me in and out of things so I would get to know the people. Now everybody seems to know who I am and I.

Q: Don't know very many people.

Lipman: I don't know. I can't remember them. And I'm not ever sure that I met all these people, but I did. But I have to take it for granted that I did somewhere.

Q: Did you ever hear of any black gangsters in Newark?

Lipman: Yes. I heard about. I read Howard Street too. I read that book. Yes. I heard about gangsters, but I didn't hear about black gangsters. I mostly heard about, I hate to say this, but Italian gangsters in the other end of town. Well, there's always, you know, the picture of that [?].

Q: Yes The guy that used to be around South Tenth Street.

Lipman: His cigar and his silk suit. Oh, I see him all the time. And with that, with the fur seats in his car. And all that. I guess that is not a picture I like to talk about. And it seems to me they don't live there at all.

Q: But it was reality. It was a part of life in Newark.

Lipman: Did you say why?

Q: Well, it is. What do you recall regarding public education in Newark? How well academically did black students seem to perform and how were they treated by white teachers and white

students in Newark?

Lipman: Well, now, I have to tell you that I think that any kid in any school, if he really wants to learn, he can learn. And we have some very good people who have come out of Newark and gone to great schools, and they have succeeded and done well. However, for the most part, the education has sunk to a new level since they changed and took over. And it seems to me, so far they've only been here a year and it hasn't improved much. But it couldn't, I don't think it could have gotten any worse.

Q: Couldn't get any worse.

Lipman: Any worse than it was before. Because the children really weren't learning much. And the parents didn't seem to know enough or care enough to go in there and see what was wrong with the kid. Some parents were very diligent about their kids learning. But when the children got to be fourth and fifth grade, that's when they start to get away. I know there were two teenagers on the hall that I live on. A very nice young man. But when they grew up, the oldest one, I'm pretty sure he was too dress. And now he was in prison because he didn't want to go to college. He finished high school. And his brother is still there, and he wanted to go to college and he couldn't because he had such a poor record in high school. He had to go get a GED before he could get into any college. Now if that doesn't tell you that something's wrong with their education. He played basketball all up and down the east coast. They were champions.

Q: What would you consider to be the five most important events or developments that have occurred in Newark during your residence here? For example, labor strikes, political elections, the riot, fires, natural disasters, or black immigration. Of those things, what do you think would be the five most important?

Lipman: Well, I remember the riots. I wasn't living in Newark then. I was living in Montclair. But, you know, they traveled all the way to Montclair. You could see the fires. And I came to

Newark every day.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO, BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE THREE

Q: Senator, I had asked you about the five most important, what you consider to be the five most important occurrences or developments in the City of Newark, specifically like natural disasters, or fires, or that kind of thing.

Lipman: Well, I remember the havoc that the riots caused. That was just before I came here. Am I going down. I'm sorry. I was saying that I remember the havoc and the destruction that the Newark riots caused. And I am so happy about the development that I see now and we could use a lot more housing, of course. We could use many things. But we are beginning now to get back some of the things that we lost in. Movie houses and sports arenas, skating, just occupations where people enjoyed themselves when they go out. I'm glad to see that reappearing. And the new kind of housing. And the businesses that are booming so far in the new buildings downtown. That's what I consider very important. Now, education is of course to me one of the most important items. I'm sorry to say that I have not been proud of the way that that has been pursued in Newark. We talk about parody and equity. Newark was almost, it was considered, and I had found this out because I've been on appropriations so long, one of the highest spending school districts there is. Talk about parody and money, extra money, being spent in this town for the disadvantaged, I don't why or how the school system got so bad where children didn't learn. It may have something to do with the homes that they came from and so forth. The foster parents and so forth that didn't know the children before they got them. All kinds of reasons. But it has gone down. I hope that in the future that it gets better. You know, Newark is a college town. We have the colleges, NJIT, Rutgers and Essex County College and all those schools around. It has been a city that's known by good medical services. We have all these hospitals that specialize in the heart and in children and so forth. So generally Newark is coming back. You asked me for five events.

Q: Yeah. Such as labor strikes. Do you remember any major or significant labor strikes?

Lipman: The teachers strike from school when I went to prison with the teachers. I was a freeholder then. And that was the first labor strike I was ever in. And the only reason I went to be incarcerated with them in Caldwell was I wanted to find out what it was all about and how much anger there was. It was a pretty awful experience. I found out then how, you know, horrible and vigorous and all those things that a labor strike could be. We got, I guess we got a better union out of it. I don't know if anything really came of it of that labor strike.

Q: How long were you incarcerated?

Lipman: Two or three days. But I left after, I skated across the dining room, not dining room, but where you ate. You know, the mess hall. On some potatoes. You know, the teachers were not regular prisoners. They were persnickety prisoners. [Laughter] They were throwing the food down on the floor and skating in it. And I fell into somebody's potatoes and went on the floor on my rear end. I decided I was coming home. I didn't want to stay there anymore. But it was, that was a novel experience. Another novel experience I had was when the annex, that is the prison in Caldwell, which is a short-term prison, was on fire. And I was the freeholder, director and they asked for me and a newspaper reporter to come in and we walked the floors of that hall where the place was burning. And the floors were so hot they seemed to burn through my shoes. They were putting out the fire, but we were trying to calm the inmates. But that was a novel experience. I've learned a lot in this job as a public servant. But probably the Senate being a little different. I mean, my place of work is about sixty miles away. And I have to be there more often than I thought I would have to be there. So I'm out of town quite a bit. It's hard to keep a steady pace. So I would say that the councilman and the mayor have a much better opportunity to really observe and see from day to day exactly what is happening in Newark.

Q: What about natural disasters? Do you remember any significant snow storms or wind storms or tornadoes?

Lipman: Oh Lord. Yes. Yes. Last year. The snow storm was terrible. And do you know, they sent for us to come to the Senate? And the governor had declared no cars on the highway except emergency vehicles. And they sent the State Police to pick me up and to drive me to Trenton. And the snow as so high that we could hardly get down that hill. You know, I live on a slight hill.

Q: Yeah. I know.

Lipman: It was. My heart was in my mouth the whole time we were going. And that was just last year. We haven't had much of a winter this year. But it was a terrible natural disaster that time. But fortunately we've been spared the floods that they have out west. They seem to be problems.

Q: What was the most significant or most, what political election in Newark has had the most impact on the black community?

Lipman: I think the election of the first black mayor. That was Kenneth Gibson. I think that had a tremendous impact. You know, you can see the changes in people's faces when they look at something that they think an achievement has been made and so forth. It's good to see that. It's good to be able to be proud of a leader.

Q: Aside from being able to identify with your leader or your leadership, what other significant impact might his election have had on Newark, the black community in Newark?

Lipman: Instead of going in so much crime and drugs and so forth, but that's what the city has mostly come to. It's not only just Newark, but Newark has come to that too, it would seem that in the earlier days there was much more family life. As the articles say the families have split, and we now have disorientation. There's a still a semblance of family life I think in Newark. I can see it in the churches around. Everybody isn't engaged in doing drugs. I think that if we could find a way to inspire that kind of feeling in the people that they had when I first witnessed the inauguration of Kenneth Gibson, I think we would, it's that feeling of pride in what you have and that you want to

strive and be better and keep your family together and all like that. Now they think of what can I do? What can I do with him? I can't do a thing with him. People call the police on their own children.

Q: Senator, what about employment and economic improvement for blacks in Newark after we elected our first black mayor?

Lipman: Well, it seemed to improve at first, but then just got bad again. I thought that with more black people in City Hall, that we would certainly, the jobs on the outside would increase and businesses would boom. And, well, the rebuilding has been slow. And there have been jobs for contractors and so forth. But, it hasn't been as swift a recovery as I would want it to be. For some reason.

Q: How much do you think that has to do with a lack of initiative?

Lipman: I don't think there's a lack of initiative in African-Americans. Because despite whatever, if the person is on welfare, they can see ways to get around it. You know, how you do? I was so thrilled when we made the first credit card, the ATM card, called Families First. And I thought that will make them feel dignified, you know, to go in and rub this credit card. But first thing I knew they were going around the corner, rubbing it in, and getting the money and.

Q: So it was an initiative, but negative initiative.

Lipman: I think it was more good than bad. But some people can get around anything. I mean, even in work first, it is I feel a great amount of. What is it? Desolate. Not desolate, but I'm worried about what will happen to people if they don't get jobs and if they get thrown off welfare. That is what I'm really worried. But then I say African-Americans, black people are always so resistant. They have the sort of personality that will make them overcome kind of any hardship. And that's what I'm hoping. That's what I'm hoping. They may not do it all legally, you know,



and above board. But I think they will exist.

Q: Can you remember any celebrations or events in the Newark black community that no longer exist?

Lipman: Celebrations that don't exist anymore. I don't know. We have the African-American Heritage Parade that was once the Christmas Attics Parade. It turned into the African-American Heritage. No, I think we did, we created a new one. We had for the first time the [?] festival. We had five thousand people there

Q: Oh really?

Lipman: It was just on Bergen Street. Yeah. There were just hordes of people from everywhere.

Q: And that used to be down on the military park. Remember, back in, what was, the late seventies No, no, no. The late eighties, the early eighties. When we first had the festival of people down at the Public Service Building.

Lipman: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Still have a festival of people. But it's at the Robert Treest now. It's all along the sidewalks, the black vendors, you know, dressed in their colorful clothes. And they have booths with food and clothes that, you know, they are selling. It's all over the, what is it, Public Service Plaza, you know, right in there I know we go there to do voter registration.

Q: Those wall pieces came from the very first festival of people. Senator, when do you feel black life in Newark reached its highest peak, and what was so great about that particular time? When do you feel black life in Newark reached it's lowest point, and what was so bad about that particular time?

Lipman: Well, I think the, at once, at highest point because we have so many professional,

policemen, firemen, councilmen, freeholders, mayors, all the elected officials. We have such beautiful new condos, whole new communities that have grown up and people have moved back to Newark or moved into Newark. Of course, we don't see them every day because they go into the city to do their business as Wall Street brokers, teachers or whatever. But we're also at the lowest point I think because there are so many people in Newark who have dropped out of school, who didn't get an education, who remain unemployed for that reason. Just can't get jobs, just can't get. They need to go back to school to get educated. That's why we have all the crime we have. Because it seems that anybody can sell drugs. So I think we are at once at the highest point because we have achieved so much and we've come such a long way. And we are at the lowest point where we're known as the carjacking capital of the whole world. And that is a very low point. So those are my thoughts about that.

Q: Okay, now we come to what I consider as being the main focal point for this interview and the many others that we have done and are doing. And that has to do with the establishment of the Scott-Krueger African-American Cultural Center. And my question there would be to you what do you recall about Louise Scott? Did you know her personally.

Lipman: I don't think. I think I met her once. But I don't recall exactly. I know we went to something at her house. And I know her daughter, her relative, Louise.

Q: Little Louise.

Lipman: Little Louise, the little one. I know her and I've seen her at functions and we've talked. But I didn't know Mrs. Scott to well.

Q: What do you know about the area where the Scott-Krueger Mansion is located?

Lipman: High Street? Martin Luther King Blvd. Oh, I know that very well. I used to work at the Hall of Records. And I used that thoroughfare back and forth, back and forth to home. And I

know the street fairly well.

Q: Did you know anybody who worked for any of the families who lived along the, cause there are some beautiful mansions along that area.

Lipman: I'm telling you. I'm telling you there are very beautiful houses.

Q: And I'm sure there must have been a time in Newark when there was many domestics who worked for families who owned those houses.

Lipman: Yeah. I do. I knew one once. A guy who lived Crawford Street. He used to tell me stories about, he used to work in one of the houses. Very near. Crawford Street is right off the street. And he used to tell me about the times he worked in the big houses and the dances and galas that they would really have that were gorgeous.

Q: There were several different breweries in Newark. Two located within the city. The Krueger Brewery which was still there when I came to Newark. And the Ballantine Brewery which was located down in the East Ward.

Lipman: East Ward. We are housed in the Ballantine Brewery now. The Share Program, the Share Food Distribution Program. So I know the inside of that one very well.

Q: Did you know anybody who worked for either one of those breweries when they were operating here?

Lipman: The Krueger Brewery. I've heard people talk who worked in there, and they talked about how they, what they did to make the beer.

Q: Finally, Senator, how would you sum up your experience of living in Newark? And if you had

your life to live over, would you live in Newark? And give me reasons why.

Lipman: Well, my two reasons why I liked Newark when I came and I still like Newark are my children who grew up here. One stayed here, my son stayed here. I thought we could do pretty good work for the people in Montclair. But I think maybe we can do more for the people in Newark. I was real happy to hear him say things like that. They seemed to enjoy the short time that they were here. Of course, my daughter had this feeling that she should move back to the state that I came from. And she knew nothing about it. That was what was so odd about it. That she is there. But she's in Georgia and she seems to like Georgia. She also liked New Jersey in that time she spent here. I wouldn't want to be another place. I tell you. With all the good things and all the bad things about Newark, I have enjoyed working here and being here and knowing the people. I like the churches. I like the feel of the city, you know. I love Bergen Street. And they tell me Bergen Street is nothing like it used to be. We used to have very fine stores on it. Bergen Street has stores now, all kinds of stores.

Q: Yeah. But Bergen Street went through its changes after the riots. Because I lived over there on Watson Avenue right off Bergen, when Bergen Street was at its height in terms of a commercial strip. There was an A&P supermarket there, and there were all kinds of other stores in there. You know that because you lived in, and we didn't know each other at that time, but you lived in the area at the same time.

Lipman: I sure did.

Q: No, you didn't live there then because this was in the late 50s and early 60s when I. [cross talk]

Lipman: I didn't come until after the riot. But I saw the results of the riot.

Q: Yeah. I knew Bergen Street at a time before you knew it.

Lipman: They told me that there used to be a beautiful commercial area on Elizabeth Avenue too. And I don't remember that at all. I never saw it. Elizabeth Avenue is just now rebuilding. Housing all of that.

Q: All right. Then if, is there anything that we didn't cover that you would like to tell me about Wynona Lipman, the person?

Lipman: No. Except I've enjoyed this interview very much because I find my interviewer so congenial. We seem to like the same things. And I'm glad to make this recording. Didn't ever think I'd have time to get around to doing it, but here we are.

Q: Let me just ask you this. What or whom do you think influenced you most to become what you are today?

Lipman: Oh dear. I don't know. My mother was always telling me that maybe I'd be president.

Q: And you still might.

Lipman: And my brothers used to say, oh go on, that can't be true. You're a girl. Girls can never be president. See, and that makes you strive harder to be anything that they think you couldn't be. And made me push harder.

Q: What then are your aspirations for your future and the future of the City of Newark?

Lipman: Well, I hope that Newark will keep building and that it will become the busy metropolis that I've heard it was before the riots. I certainly think that we have made a lot of progress since the riots. You can see it daily. That's what so, that's what is what inspires me so much about Newark. I can actually see these buildings that weren't around, the housing that wasn't there. It was quite desolate and now we are springing back. And pretty soon we'll have a metropolis like

Chicago or some of the others.

Q: Well, Senator Lipman, thank you so very much for your willingness to come and to participate in this cultural center project. And I certainly hope that it's going to be a huge success. So all I can say to you is thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW